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## THE FOREIGN SERVICE

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Subject: GUADELOUPE, FRENCH WEST INDIES

Prepared by: Frederick D. Hunt  
American Consul

Guadeloupe is an island of the lesser Antilles between the Windward Group and the Leeward Group. It is located between the 15.80 and 16.40 degrees north latitude and 61.00 to 61.50 longitude west. The Atlantic Ocean is on ~~the~~ east or windward side while the Caribbean Sea is on the leeward side. <sup>the</sup>

Guadeloupe is actually composed of two islands known as Basse-Terre on the West and Grande-Terre on the east. The former is rugged and mountainous while the latter is low rolling country. The two islands touch each other, being separated only by a strip of water about 150 feet wide which is called the Riviere Salee or Salty River. Where the two islands meet forms a bay on the southern side and here is located Pointe-a-Pitre, the principal port and economic city. The political capital is located at Basse-Terre, which is on the west side of the island by that name and is forty-two miles distant from Pointe-a-Pitre, by road.

Grande-Terre has an area of about 400 square miles and a population around 174,000 persons. Basse-Terre has an area of about 650 <sup>square</sup> miles but a population of only 88,500.

There are five small islands which are political dependencies of Guadeloupe. Three of them are very close, but two are much further to the north and form what is actually part of the Virgin Islands Group. The three close by are: Marie Galante on the south with an area of 100 square miles and 300,000 inhabitants; Les Saintes, a small group of rocky islands, also to the south, composing about 9 square miles and having about 2,000 inhabitants; and Desirade, a small island off the east coast of Grande-Terre, having 18 square miles area and about 1,750 inhabitants. In the north, at about 18 degrees latitude, are St. Barthelemy with 16 square miles and 2,500 population and just west of that island is St. Martin which is half Dutch and half French.

The northwest side which is French has an area of about 35 square miles and a population of about 7,000.

The climate is warm and humid but is tempered by the prevailing trade winds which come from the southeast most of the year. The hottest months are September and October when these winds are very weak. The temperature ranges from 73 to 90 degrees in the lowlands. Humidity ranges from 60 to 90 degrees and average rainfall is about 81 inches. The climate might be compared with New York City or Washington in July and August except that there is much more relief from the heat at night.

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The Government of Guadeloupe and its dependancies is as a Department of France. The Civil head is a Prefect appointed by the Minister of Interior, assisted by a Secretary General, and a Sub-Prefect. This Government has existed since the assimilation became effective on January 1, 1948 but has not proven very satisfactory.

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The whole island is divided into 34 Communes, each under an elected Mayor and council which performs municipal Government. Each Commune sends a member to the Legislative Council which had considerable power under the colonial regime but now it is restricted merely to discussion and to approval of the budget for local expenditures of locally raised funds. The Island sends three deputies and one Senator to the Parliament in Paris. The three principal cities are Pointe-a-Pitre, with about 40,000 inhabitants, Le Moule with about 17,000 and Basse-Terre with 14,500.

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